

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-20 AID-20 EB-11 SWF-02 PRS-01 PA-04

USIA-15 EUR-25 L-03 SS-20 NSC-07 CIAE-00 INR-11

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AID/FFP:MR. MAIR (INFO)

EB/ORF/OFPP:MR. SERVICE (INFO)

----- 014333

P R 032307Z SEP 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, IN, US

SUBJECT: INDIAN PL 480 FOOD REQUIREMENTS

1. ACTING DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY LAINGEN TELEPHONED
AMBASSADOR KAUL SEPTEMBER 3 CONCERNING APPARENT UNCERTAINTY
IN PRESS REPORTS OF POSSIBLE INDIAN INTEREST IN FOOD
AVAILABILITY UNDER PL 480.

2. LAINGEN NOTED INCONSISTENCY BETWEEN (A) STORY SEPTEMBER
3 NEW YORK TIMES QUOTING GOI SPOKESMAN AS FIRMLY DENYING
THAT INDIA HAD ASKED U.S. FOR CONCESSIONAL FOOD SALES AND
(B) WHAT WE HAD INTERPRETED TO BE OFFICIAL REQUEST FOR
SUCH FOOD SALES BY KAUL DURING MEETING WITH ASSISTANT
SECRETARY ATHERTON AUGUST 20 (STATE 186609).

3. KAUL EMPHASIZED THAT HIS INQUIRY AND COMMENTS DURING
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THAT CONVERSATION DID NOT CONSTITUTE AN OFFICIAL GOI

REQUEST FOR PL 480. HE SAID HE HAD RAISED THE SUBJECT WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF AN INQUIRY AS TO WHAT ACTIONS THE USG MIGHT BE CONSIDERING TAKING IN RESPONSE TO THE SPECIAL UNGA APPEAL FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO THE MOST SERIOUSLY AFFECTED COUNTRIES IN THE CURRENT ENERGY/RESOURCE CRISIS. WITHIN THAT CONTEXT, HIS PURPOSE HAD BEEN TO MAKE CLEAR TO THE USG THAT INDIA WAS AMONG THOSE IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE, PERHAPS TO THE EXTENT OF 1-2 MILLION TONS OF WHEAT.

4. KAUL WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE DID NOT ASSUME THAT ANY SPECIFIC REQUEST ON THE PART OF INDIA TO THE USG FOR CONSIDERATION OF ASSISTANCE WITHIN THIS CONTEXT SHOULD BE NECESSARY. THE US WAS ALREADY AWARE IN FAIRLY SPECIFIC TERMS WHAT INDIA'S FOOD REQUIREMENTS WOULD BE.

5. LATER IN DAY, GONSALVES CALLED TO EXPLAIN THAT INDIANS WERE INDEED INTERESTED IN US FOOD ASSISTANCE, BUT HAD SERIOUS DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROBLEMS IN ANNOUNCING THAT THEY WERE REQUESTING PL 480 HELP FROM THE US. FOR THIS REASON, AMBASSADOR HAD PLACED INDIAN INTEREST IN FOOD HELP IN CONTEXT OF UNGA EMERGENCY FUND. INDIANS WOULD PRESENT ANY HELP IT RECEIVED FROM US AS COMING UNDER UN RUBRIC, ALTHOUGH GOI RECOGNIZED THAT ONLY VEHICLE UNDER WHICH US COULD PROVIDE THE ASSISTANCE WAS PL 480. IMPORTANT THING WAS THAT INDIA'S NEED FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED; "MODALITIES" BY WHICH ANY ASSISTANCE WERE TO BE PROVIDED COULD BE CONSIDERED LATER. GONSALVES SAID INDIANS WERE SORRY IF CONFUSION HAD BEEN CREATED IN OUR MINDS ABOUT THEIR FOOD NEEDS, BUT HOPED US WOULD UNDERSTAND POLITICAL PROBLEMS THEY FACED IN PUBLIC REQUEST FOR PL 480 HELP.

6. WE REVIEWED DEPT PRESS GUIDANCE (SEPTTEL) WITH GONSALVES WHO SAID LONDON EMBASSY HAD USED SIMILAR LINE IN TALKING WITH PTI. INGERSOLL

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